

STATE OF NEW YORK

1201--B

2023-2024 Regular Sessions

IN SENATE

January 10, 2023

Introduced by Sens. PARKER, ADDABBO, COMRIE, FERNANDEZ, HINCHEY -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Energy and Telecommunications -- reported favorably from said committee, ordered to first and second report, ordered to a third reading, passed by Senate and delivered to the Assembly, recalled, vote reconsidered, restored to third reading, amended and ordered reprinted, retaining its place in the order of third reading -- recommitted to the Committee on Energy and Telecommunications in accordance with Senate Rule 6, sec. 8 -- committee discharged, bill amended, ordered reprinted as amended and recommitted to said committee

AN ACT to amend the public service law, in relation to establishing discount programs for veterans

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

1 Section 1. The public service law is amended by adding a new section
2 66-x to read as follows:

3 § 66-x. Utility discount program. 1. (a) Notwithstanding any other
4 provision of law, the commission is authorized and directed to require a
5 gas corporation, electric corporation or municipality to establish a
6 discount program for veterans no later than ninety days after the effec-
7 tive date of this section. Such program shall offer a yearly benefit to
8 veterans in the form of a ten percent discount on utility bills. The
9 fiscal impact of such program shall not be borne by customers and shall
10 not be added to bills rendered by a gas corporation, electric corpo-
11 ration or municipality to customers.

12 (b) A gas corporation, electric corporation or municipality which
13 offers such discount program shall conspicuously advertise the avail-
14 ability and amount of such discount on the website of such gas corpo-
15 ration, electric corporation or municipality. The availability and
16 amount of such discount shall also be conspicuously advertised on the

EXPLANATION--Matter in italics (underscored) is new; matter in brackets
[-] is old law to be omitted.

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1 accessibility page of the website of such gas corporation, electric
2 corporation or municipality.

3 2. (a) For the purposes of this section, "veteran" shall mean a resi-
4 dent of the state who (i) is the primary named utility service account-
5 holder; (ii) has had a total household income of less than fifty thou-
6 sand dollars for the most recent two consecutive income tax years
7 beginning in two thousand twenty, as verified by the department of taxa-
8 tion and finance; and (iii) served in and who received any honorable or
9 general discharge from the United States army, navy, air force, marine
10 corps, coast guard and/or the reserves thereof, and/or the army national
11 guard, air national guard, New York guard or New York naval militia.

12 (b) A primary named utility service accountholder shall provide the
13 gas corporation, electric corporation or municipality an authenticat-
14 ed copy of such accountholder's discharge papers to be eligible for such
15 discount to demonstrate eligibility under paragraph (a) of this subdivi-
16 sion.

17 § 2. The public service law is amended by adding a new section 89-q to
18 read as follows:

19 § 89-q. Water discount program. 1. (a) Notwithstanding any other
20 provision of law, the commission is authorized and directed to require
21 waterworks corporations and municipal water systems to establish a
22 discount program for veterans no later than ninety days after the effec-
23 tive date of this section. Such program shall offer a yearly benefit to
24 veterans in the form of a ten percent discount on water utility bills.
25 The fiscal impact of such program shall not be borne by customers and
26 shall not be added to bills rendered by a waterworks corporation or
27 municipal water system to customers.

28 (b) A waterworks corporation or municipal water system which offers
29 such discount program shall conspicuously advertise the availability and
30 amount of such discount on the website of such waterworks corporation or
31 municipal water system. The availability and amount of such discount
32 shall also be conspicuously advertised on the accessibility page of the
33 website of such waterworks corporation or municipal water system.

34 2. (a) For the purposes of this section, "veteran" shall mean a resi-
35 dent of the state who (i) is the primary named waterworks or municipal
36 water system service accountholder; (ii) has had a total household
37 income of less than fifty thousand dollars for the most recent two
38 consecutive income tax years beginning in two thousand twenty, as veri-
39 fied by the department of taxation and finance; and (iii) served in and
40 who received any honorable or general discharge from the United States
41 army, navy, air force, marine corps, coast guard and/or the reserves
42 thereof, and/or the army national guard, air national guard, New York
43 guard or New York naval militia.

44 (b) A primary named waterworks or municipal water system service
45 accountholder shall provide the waterworks corporation or municipal
46 water system an authenticated copy of such accountholder's discharge
47 papers to be eligible for such discount to demonstrate eligibility under
48 paragraph (a) of this subdivision.

49 § 3. The public service law is amended by adding a new section 91-b to
50 read as follows:

51 § 91-b. Telephone discount program. 1. (a) Notwithstanding any other
52 provision of law, the commission is authorized and directed to require a
53 telephone corporation to establish a discount program for veterans no
54 later than ninety days after the effective date of this section. Such
55 program shall offer a yearly benefit to veterans in the form of a ten
56 percent discount on telephone bills. The fiscal impact of such program

1 shall not be borne by customers and shall not be added to bills rendered
2 by a telephone corporation to customers.

3 (b) A telephone corporation which offers such discount program shall
4 conspicuously advertise the availability and amount of such discount on
5 the website of such telephone corporation. The availability and amount
6 of such discount shall also be conspicuously advertised on the accessi-
7 bility page of the website of such telephone corporation.

8 (c) Participation in the federal government's Lifeline or Affordable
9 Connectivity program, any successor federal program or any successor
10 state program established by the commission that is substantially simi-
11 lar in eligibility and participation criteria to the federal govern-
12 ment's affordable connectivity program shall satisfy the telephone
13 corporation's or cable television company's obligation to establish a
14 discount program under paragraph (a) of this subdivision, unless the
15 commission deems it insufficient to satisfy such requirements.

16 (d) A telephone corporation or cable television company shall not be
17 obligated to establish a discount program under paragraph (a) of this
18 subdivision if the commission deems a current program already in place
19 through such telephone corporation or cable television company satisfies
20 the criteria established under this subdivision.

21 (e) Before applying a discount under paragraph (a) of this subdivi-
22 sion, a telephone corporation may require proof of eligibility from the
23 primary named telephone service accountholder for the calendar year in
24 which the discount is sought.

25 2. (a) For the purposes of this section, "veteran" shall mean a resi-
26 dent of the state who (i) is the primary named telephone service
27 accountholder; (ii) has had a total household income of less than fifty
28 thousand dollars for the most recent two consecutive income tax years
29 beginning in two thousand twenty, as verified by the department of taxa-
30 tion and finance; and (iii) served in and who received any honorable or
31 general discharge from the United States army, navy, air force, marine
32 corps, coast guard and/or the reserves thereof, and/or the army national
33 guard, air national guard, New York guard or New York naval militia.

34 (b) A primary named telephone service accountholder shall provide the
35 telephone corporation an authenticated copy of such accountholder's
36 discharge papers to be eligible for such discount to demonstrate eligi-
37 bility under paragraph (a) of this subdivision.

38 § 4. The public service law is amended by adding a new section 224-d
39 to read as follows:

40 § 224-d. Cable discount program. 1. (a) Notwithstanding any other
41 provision of law, the commission is authorized and directed to require a
42 telephone corporation, as defined in subdivision seventeen of section
43 two of this chapter, and a cable television company, as defined in
44 section two hundred twelve of this article, that provides cable service
45 to customers in New York, to establish a discount program for veterans
46 no later than ninety days after the effective date of this section. Such
47 program shall offer a yearly benefit to veterans in the form of a ten
48 percent discount on cable bills. The fiscal impact of such program shall
49 not be borne by customers and shall not be added to bills rendered by a
50 telephone corporation or cable television company to customers.

51 (b) A telephone corporation or cable television company which offers
52 such discount program shall conspicuously advertise the availability and
53 amount of such discount on the website of such telephone corporation or
54 cable television company. The availability and amount of such discount
55 shall also be conspicuously advertised on the accessibility page of the
56 website of such telephone corporation or cable television company.

1 (c) Participation in the federal government's Lifeline or Affordable
2 Connectivity program, or any successor program the commission shall deem
3 sufficient, shall satisfy the telephone corporation's or cable tele-
4 vision company's obligation to establish a discount program under para-
5 graph (a) of this subdivision, unless the commission deems it insuffi-
6 cient to satisfy such requirements.

7 (d) Before applying a discount under paragraph (a) of this subdivi-
8 sion, a telephone corporation or cable television company may require
9 proof of eligibility from the primary named cable service accountholder
10 for the calendar year in which the discount is sought.

11 2. (a) For the purposes of this section, "veteran" shall mean a resi-
12 dent of the state who (i) is the primary named cable service account-
13 holder; (ii) has had a total household income of less than fifty thou-
14 sand dollars for the most recent two consecutive income tax years
15 beginning in two thousand twenty, as verified by the department of taxa-
16 tion and finance; and (iii) received any honorable or general discharge
17 from the United States army, navy, air force, marine corps, coast guard
18 and/or the reserves thereof, and/or the army national guard, air
19 national guard, New York guard or New York naval militia.

20 (b) A primary named cable service accountholder shall provide the
21 telephone corporation or the cable television company an authenticated
22 copy of such accountholder's discharge papers to be eligible for such
23 discount to demonstrate eligibility under paragraph (a) of this subdivi-
24 sion.

25 § 5. This act shall take effect on the one hundred eightieth day after
26 it shall have become a law.